

**Testimony to Connecticut General Assembly Planning and Development Committee regarding H.B. No. 7192  
An Act Concerning Municipal and Regional Opportunities and Efficiencies  
Howard Richman, Town of Greenwich Tax Collector  
March 20, 2019**

Co-chairs Cristin McCarthy Vahey and Steve Cassano, Ranking members Dan Champagne and Tami Zawistowski, members of the Planning and Development Committee, fellow elected Tax Collectors and the audience—My name is Howard Richman. I am the elected Tax Collector of the Town of Greenwich. I am speaking in opposition to H.B. No. 7192 specifically Section 15 which calls for the sunseting of elected Tax Collectors.

A little bit about my background—I ran for Tax Collector in Greenwich in 2015 and lost. I came back to run again in 2017 and won, defeating a four-term incumbent. I have also run for office in this body—Senate in 1994 and House in 2010.

My first career spanned 35 years in Corporate America where I took my job very seriously. I take my current job as Tax Collector very seriously. If you check with the Greenwich delegation, Representatives Camillo, Floren, Meskers and Senator Bergstein, I believe they will confirm that.

This proposed legislation does not carry out CTx, OPM or the Governor's office goal of making tax collecting a profession. If enacted, the hiring of Tax Collectors would be done by a municipal board (Finance Board or Board of Selectman). The municipality would be under no restraint and could appoint a person who is a member of the controlling political party regardless of tax collection experience. There would be no requirement to retain the current Tax Collector who may have achieved or is in the process of achieving CCMC certification. All 80 elected Tax Collectors could be gone.

There is an advantage of having an elected Tax Collector. Elected Tax Collectors are not subject to internal municipal pressure. Their jobs cannot be threatened by other town employees or municipal boards. There have been instances where an appointed Tax Collector has been asked to waive interest for a town official putting the collector in an untenable position because 1) waiving interest would violate state statute and 2) not waiving interest might put the collector's job in jeopardy as that or other town officials might have influence on who occupies the Tax Collector position.

You are all elected. Elected positions are important for government to function properly. You understand the importance of voter choice. If this bill is enacted in its current form 80 municipalities and thousands of voters in the State of Connecticut will be deprived of choice. Power will be taken away from the electorate and concentrated in the hands of a few people.

Please do not let this bill go forward.

Thank you for your time.